DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 254 132 HE 018 028

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TITLE Advice and Recommendations: Improving the Work Environment of Part-Timers.
INSTITUTION American Association for Higher Education, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Oct 84
NOTE 3p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Journal Articles (080)
JOURNAL CIT AAHE Bulletin; p13-15 Oct 1984

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Faculty; *Employment Practices; Faculty Development; Faculty Evaluation; Higher Education; *Interprofessional Relationship; Job Satisfaction; *Part Time Faculty; *Personnel Policy; School Orientation; Teacher Employment Benefits; Teacher Participation; Teacher Salaries; *Work Environment

ABSTRACT

Ways in which colleges can meet the needs of part-time faculty are suggested, based upon the experiences of community colleges. Recommendations concern basic needs, orientation, and staff development and evaluation. Advice for institutions includes: establish a salary scale for part-time faculty equal to that for full-time faculty teaching overloads; offer part-timers fringe benefits on a proportional basis; provide office space and clerical assistance whenever possible; include part-timers in the college catalog and faculty directories; offer a general orientation each semester for new part-time faculty; provide for new part-time faculty a campus tour and a departmental orientation; require part-timers to attend departmental meetings; invite part-timers to departmental social events; encourage part-time faculty to participate in staff development programs; and inform part-timers at the time of hiring that they will be evaluated. It is suggested that evaluation of the part-time faculty member should include assessments by students and supervisors, and possibly peer evaluations. The results of the evaluation should be discussed with the part-timer. (SW)

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ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS:
Improving the Work Environment for Part-Timers

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by Mary M. Norman

As a sector, community colleges have the most extensive experience with the employment of part-time faculty. Within that sector, enlightened leadership and some disastrous mistakes have produced a body of knowledge about the value of part-timers to all colleges.

It may be important to note at the start that community colleges have employed large numbers of part-time faculty for decades and began doing so for educational, not financial, reasons. From the mid-50's through the early 70's, when these colleges came into being at the rate of one a week, they recruited able part-time faculty primarily because full-time academics were in such short supply. The best potential teachers were to be found in the ranks of already employed local professionals, including faculty from nearby schools and colleges.

Today, part-timers are employed in community colleges for two reasons. First, given the rise of occupational programs and the inherently small pool of people qualified to teach them, the college has to look among professionals employed by business, industry, and government for adjunct faculty. Second, as community colleges are asked to be more productive with fewer dollars, they (like other colleges) employ part-time faculty because it often makes the best financial sense.

To give a sense of the importance of part-time faculty to community colleges, consider the following: the faculty count at all public community colleges as of October 1982 was 95,355 full-time faculty and 132,526 part-time faculty.[1]

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Part-time instructors present special problems for any college. They are a diverse group, with varying motivations and concerns. I've dealt with part-time faculty as a dean of students, academic dean, and president. The three concerns I've heard from them again and again agree with those in the recent report by Leslie, Kellams, and Gunne[2]—part-timers feel out of touch with their departments, they lack feedback on their teaching, and they have too little contact with students.

How does an institution meet these concerns, *and* assure itself effective quality control? There is no one answer; each college must analyze its own situation and proceed from there.[3] From my own experience and the experience of community colleges across the country, and from a long string of successes and mistakes, I proffer the following.

The Basics

- Each institution should establish a salary scale for part-timers the same as that for full-time faculty teaching overloads.
- Fringe benefits should be offered to part-timers on a proportional basis.
- As appropriate, part-time faculty should be designated as adjunct professors. Titles don't hurt and have a positive effect on morale.
- If a part-time faculty member has worked for the institution for some time, it is useful to list her or him in the catalog. Part-timers should be listed by name on the semester or quarterly class schedule.
- Part-time faculty should be allowed to park in faculty lots. Ideally, space should be set aside for them since they come and go at odd times during the working day.
- Office space and clerical assistance should be offered whenever possible. If individual offices cannot be provided, at least desks should be set aside for part-timers in a department or division complex.

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• All part-time personnel should be placed on the college's mailing list so that they receive all college and departmental information.
• The names of all part-time faculty should be listed in the college telephone directory. If this cannot be done on a college-wide basis, it at least should be circulated within the academic department.

Orientation

• Each semester there should be a general orientation for newly hired part-time faculty. Ideally this would be led by the president, provost, or academic vice president. Among other things, it should cover policies and regulations governing part-time employment. Questions should be encouraged.
• This general orientation should include a campus tour. At the least, faculty should become acquainted with the building(s) where they will teach and where their academic department is housed.
• The general orientation should be followed by a departmental orientation, with all full-time members of the department invited. The discussions here should be specific about the philosophy of the department and the types of students the part-timers will encounter.
• Each part-time faculty member should be provided with a "Who's Who" campus listing. The list should be problem-oriented: i.e., for financial aid see ____, for typing, see ____, and so on.

Development

For instructional quality to be maintained, staff development for part-time faculty members is at least as crucial as for full-time faculty.
• Part-time faculty should be required to attend departmental meetings on a regular basis. This may mean rearranging schedules, but it is essential for purposes of communication, continuity, and planning.
• Each part-time faculty member should be assigned a mentor from the full-time staff of the department. This simple process gives part-timers a feeling of belonging and support.
• Part-time faculty should be invited to all departmental social events—and encouraged to attend.
• Part-time faculty should be invited to all staff-development programs conducted for full-time faculty.
• Part-time faculty should be asked to identify their own particular set of concerns and needs. The college then should arrange for developmental programs specifically designed for part-timers. Programs that have universal appeal to part-time faculty deal with time-management, student development, and learning and teaching methods.

Evaluation

All part-time faculty must be evaluated on a regular, routine basis. This is the only way to assure that quality education is occurring in the classroom. Evaluation procedures must be consistent with institutional goals and follow the same criteria established for evaluation of full-time faculty.
• Part-time faculty must be informed at the time they are hired that they will be evaluated. The evaluation process must be fully explained. They must be told who will do the evaluation, when it will occur, and how the results of the evaluation will be used.
• The evaluation should include assessments by students and by departmental or division heads, and may include peer evaluations conducted by full-time faculty. The departmental evaluation should include a classroom visit.
• The results of the evaluation should be discussed thoroughly with the part-time faculty member by the department chair. The results should form a basis for improvement, not just dismissal. If certain remedies are recommended, the departmental mentor should be used.

A college administration that follows these recommendations will go a long way toward integrating a vital personnel force. When academic leaders instill in part-timers a feeling of self-fulfillment and the opportunity to develop, they take a significant step toward reducing management problems.[4]

The reality is that most colleges, and certainly community colleges, could not survive without part-time faculty members. Each college must assure that the quality of instruction remains high and that part-time faculty members convey a positive image for the institution.[5] Part-time faculty are as important to the marketing of a college as are full-time faculty and staff. They must be made to feel that they are a vital part of the institution or its image and quality will be negatively effected.

Notes

[1] Yarrington, R. (Ed.) (1983) *Community, Junior and Technical College Directory*, AACJC, Washington, D.C.
[2] Leslie, D. W. Kellams, S. E. & Gunne, G. M. (1982) *Part-time Faculty in American Higher Education*, Praeger Publishers, New York.
[3] Harris, D. A. (1980) From the presidents' perspective: Part-time faculty in the 1980's. *New Directions for Community Colleges: Using part-time faculty effectively*. Michael H. Parson, Guest Editor. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc. Publishers, 30.
[4] Grymes, R. J., Jr. (1979, Winter). The new priority: Management of part-time instructors. *Catalyst*, 9 (1), p. 18.
[5] Hammans, J. (1971). Adjunct faculty: Another look. *Community College Frontiers*. Sangamon State University, Springfield, Illinois, 9 (2), 52-53.